HOLIDAY PREVIEW: RETRO-LOOK WATCHES; MEN'S FRAGRANCES
A COAST GUARD RESALE UPDATE: WHAT'S IN A NEW NAME?

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New Orleans Fanfare

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contents

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A new name for Coast Guard resale. → 20

Lighting up the Christmas ore view. → 22

6 **News** — House panel just says NO to central warehouses for Army commissaries in U.S.; it says focus on Europe. And the Marine Corps' exchange group gets a new name, too.

18 **On-the-Scene Report** — At the VCS hearing: Questions on tobacco and reorganization.

20 **System of the Month** — Coast Guard resale's new name, new office.

22 **Holiday Preview** — An old, a new Christmas.

30 **Market Report** — Snacks: We love 'em.

58 **New Products**

59 **Supplier Notes/ Troop Maneuvers**

60 **Promos**

61 **Military Market Index**

62 **Calendar**

63 **Com-Ex Comix/Ad Index**

64 **The Last Word**

SPECIAL SECTION
Page 35 — New Orleans Fanfare

36 **Show Tips** — For vendors and delegates.

37 **City Map** — Getting around The Big Easy.

38 **Schedule** — Workshop times.

40 **AAFES List** — They're here.

49 **Marine Corps' List** — They're here, too.

50 **Exhibitor List** — Booth numbers and company.

53 **Category List** — Items by groups.

56 **Floor Plan** — It's a big, busy place.

COVER DESIGN BY PAUL JORDAN; PHOTOS BY KATE PATTERSON

Military Market
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EDITOR
Nancy Tucker
MANAGING EDITOR
Robert A. Devaney
ASSOCIATE EDITORS
Beverly Jones, Gregory Wright, Marie Ferrey
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NEWS SERVICE
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STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS
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CIRCULATION MANAGER
Andrew J. Wall
ADVERTISING PRODUCTION
Phyllis King
EDITORIAL PRODUCTION
Cynthia Aldridge, Don Ponton

EXECUTIVE/EDITORIAL
6883 Commercial Drive
Springfield, Virginia 22159-0210
(703) 750-8676
FAX # (703) 750-8622
ADVERTISING SALES
1 Citicorp Center
153 East 53rd Street
New York, New York 10022
(212) 753-1040

VICE PRESIDENT–EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
James S. Doyle
VICE PRESIDENT–ADVERTISING
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NATIONAL SALES MANAGER
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Retro Look Turns Back the Clocks

"I hesitate to call retro watches a technical look. It's more an old-fashioned technical look."

Watch manufacturers are shying away from the high-tech and instead are rolling back the clock to the "good old days."

Instead of making futuristic timepieces that can calculate foreign exchange rates and tell the wearer what time it is in Moscow, watch makers are now turning to the vintage "retro look."

"A major feature [among] today's watchmakers is to rediscover the watch's past," said Joseph Thompson, editor-in-chief of *Modern Jeweler*. "The retro-look watches are re-creations of watches from the 1920s and '30s." The trend, Thompson said, has been growing for a couple of years.

What makes the retro look so distinctive? Besides hour and minute hands, vintage reproduction watches can sport three to four sub-dials that indicate the day of the week and month. Other dead-giveaway features are Roman numerals, flat or square watchcases, and moon-phase dials.

"I hesitate to call retro watches a technical look," Thompson told MILITARY MARKET. "It's more an old-fashioned technical look."

Though the watches have become a fashion trend in the 80's, Thompson said timepieces with multiple dials and moon-faces had a practical purpose in the past. Farmers used them to time the beginning of crop planting and harvesting, which were aligned with the phases of the moon.

Not to Tell Time, But to Show Style

Today, the original purposes are all but forgotten. Most people buy imitations of antique watches because of nostalgia and the fact they are impressed with the timepieces' craftmanship.

Bernard Dwortzan, Pulsar Time Corp.'s general manager for special markets, said the company "is now concentrating on the retro look." Beginning this summer, Pulsar is offering the "Galileo Collection," a series of 32 men's and women's retro-look watches. The timepieces feature moon phase dials and sub-dials that indicate the month and day.

Dwortzan said the Army and Air Force Exchange Service has already ordered a limited number of Pulsar's retro-look watches, which retail between $125 and $150 in civilian stores.

"AAFES has ordered a couple, [though] they don't have them all," he said. "If anyone wants these watches, they can special order them through our catalog."

In January, Timex Corp. introduced the "Timex Carriage" series, which includes "about a dozen or so styles that would qualify as retro," said Hal Wylie, manager of product planning and sales development.

The collection, which has watches that retail between $34 and $54 in civilian stores, includes watches with square cases, Roman numbers, moon-phase dials and sub-dials for seconds.

Military Not Quite Impressed by Retro Look

Before exchanges rush to stock their shelves with vintage-look watchware in time for the holiday season, they should realize that the style may not appeal to all servicemembers. "They buy certain models more than others — those with 24-hour dials, more sportswatches and more rugged, technical pieces," said Bernard Dwortzan of Pulsar.

"But on the other hand," he said after thinking a moment, "they do buy dress watches."

AAFES has carried retro-look watches for about one year. Although the agency now carries vintage reproductions by Bulova, Seiko, Pulsar and Hamilton Watch Co., the retro look never really caught on in AAFES after a special promotion last Christmas.

"That look peaked during Christmas season 1987," said Capt. Steve Roehr, an agency spokesman. "We had a one-time buy with Gruen that went very well. Ever since then, the retro look has been on a downhill slide."

Roehr said one reason the retro-look is fading in AAFES is because vintage watches are more popular among the affluent. "Most middle class people don't mess with the look," he told MILITARY MARKET.

Also, AAFES exchanges sometimes have limited display space, so they can't carry a wide assortment of vintage styles, said a buyer at AAFES headquarters who did not want to be quoted by name.

There are indications that vintage chronographs may be doing better in Navy exchanges than in AAFES. Gruen is the principal retro-look brand sold in Navy stores. The company is also known for its Curvex model, which is curved to fit the wrist.

Officials at the Navy Resale and Services Support Office predict that retro watches, which retail between $38.99 and $119 in Navy exchanges, should sell well during the agency's Fall and Christmas promotions.

Vintage-look watches were previously featured in NAVRESSO' Mother's Day, 213th Anniversary, and Christmas 1987 circulars.

Watch Sales Slow in '87

According to the latest statistics available from MRCA Information Services, watch sales dropped approximately 6.6 percent between 1986 and 1984:

1987

Women's/girls' watches — 27.8 million
Men's/boys' watches — 18.7 million
Total — 46.5 million

1986

Women's/girls' watches — 29.3 million
Men's/boys' watches — 20.5 million
Total — 49.8 million

Military Market index

COMMISSARIES

		APRIL			YEAR TO DATE		
		CY'88	CY'87	% CHANGE	CY'88	CY'87	% CHANGE
	CONUS	$171,506	$162,838	5.32	$635,347	$624,659	1.71
	OVERSEAS	43,021	34,135	26.03	143,382	129,167	11.01
AIR FORCE	TOTAL	**214,527**	**196,973**	**8.91**	**778,729**	**753,826**	**3.30**
	CONUS	116,760	113,295	3.06	453,110	437,535	3.56
	OVERSEAS	45,990	38,640	19.02	175,035	150,465	16.33
ARMY	TOTAL	**162,750**	**151,935**	**7.12**	**628,145**	**588,000**	**6.83**
	CONUS	60,409	58,669	2.97	255,274	248,127	2.88
	OVERSEAS	7,120	6,566	8.44	28,870	28,028	3.00
NAVY	TOTAL	**67,530**	**65,235**	**3.52**	**284,143**	**276,156**	**2.89**
	CONUS	14,382	13,432	7.07	55,552	53,462	3.91
	OVERSEAS	324	273	18.68	1,216	1,053	15.48
MARINE CORPS	TOTAL	**14,707**	**13,705**	**7.31**	**56,768**	**54,515**	**4.13**
	CONUS	248	254	-2.36	1,059	1,008	5.06
	OVERSEAS	252	327	-22.94	1,119	1,297	-13.72
COAST GUARD	TOTAL	**501**	**581**	**-13.77**	**2,178**	**2,305**	**-5.51**
	CONUS	$363,305	$348,488	4.25	$1,400,342	$1,364,791	2.60
	OVERSEAS	$96,707	$79,941	20.97	$349,622	$310,010	12.78
ALL COMMISSARIES	TOTAL	**$460,012**	**$428,429**	**7.37**	**$1,749,964**	**$1,674,801**	**4.49**
GROCERY STORES	*U.S.*[1]	*$25.373*	*$24.226*	*4.73*	*$98.372*	*$94.268*	*4.35*

EXCHANGES

		APRIL			YEAR TO DATE		
		CY'88	CY'87	% CHANGE	CY'88	CY'87	% CHANGE
	CONUS	$287,449	$278,482	3.22	$1,020,395	954,339	6.92
	OVERSEAS	232,859	213,747	8.94	853,068	722,836	18.02
AAFES	TOTAL	**520,306**	**492,228**	**5.70**	**1,873,462**	**1,677,175**	**11.70**
	CONUS[2]	95,870	98,538	-2.71	380,194	343,154	10.79
	OVERSEAS[2]	41,976	42,586	-1.43	166,605	150,898	10.41
NAVY	TOTAL[2]	**137,836**	**141,124**	**-2.33**	**546,789**	**494,052**	**10.67**
	CONUS	31,529	30,926	1.95	113,076	109,796	2.99
	OVERSEAS	5,353	4,991	7.25	20,313	18,554	.948
MARINE CORPS	TOTAL	**36,883**	**35,917**	**2.69**	**133,390**	**128,350**	**3.93**
	CONUS[3]	6,787	6,926	-2.01	24,441	24,940	-2.00
	OVERSEAS[3]	506	516	-1.94	1,821	1,858	-1.99
COAST GUARD	TOTAL[3]	**7,293**	**7,442**	**-2.00**	**26,262**	**26,798**	**-2.00**
	CONUS[4]	1,276	1,428	-10.64	5,538	6,127	-9.61
	OVERSEAS[4]	1,938	2,170	-10.69	8,204	8,461	-3.04
MAIL ORDER	TOTAL[4]	**3,215**	**3,598**	**-10.64**	**13,742**	**14,588**	**-5.80**
	CONUS	$422,911	$416,300	1.59	$1,543,644	$1,438,356	7.32
	OVERSEAS	$282,632	$264,010	7.05	$1,050,011	$902,607	16.33
ALL EXCHANGES	TOTAL	**$705,543**	**$680,310**	**3.71**	**$2,593,655**	**$2,340,963**	**10.79**
DEPARTMENT STORES	*U.S.*[1]	*$11.588*	*$11.364*	*1.97*	*$40.572*	*$38.540*	*5.27*

1) SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2) Does not include sales of ship stores. 3) MM estimate, based on official data. 4) Includes consolidated sales for all services, including Coast Guard. NOTE: Individual figures may not add to totals because of rounding. All sales are expressed in thousands (add 000), except grocery stores and department stores, which are in billions. Commissary sales include appropriate surcharges; exchange sales include concession volume.
NOTE: Distribution of sales by CONUS and overseas is based on definition by respective service and system. Figures do not include sales tax.